products of sandalwood is freely allowed under the Export and Import Policy with the exception of sandalwood oil which is permitted against export licences. Exporters of these commodities can get the benefit of market development assistance and participate in buyer seller meets, trade fairs and exhibitions through the respective Export Promotion Councils.

CBI Raids on the premises of STC Officials

6652. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appeared in the Hindustan Times, New Delhi dated March 28, 1997 under captioned "CBI raids premises of STC officials";

(b) if so, whether STC had been asked to pay damages to certain companies for the losses incurred by them;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the extent of loss caused to the exchequer; and

(e) the action taken against the officials of STC and other Departments involved in the scandal ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (e) The Government have noted the news item which appeared in the Hindustan Times, New Delhi of 28th March, 1997 captioned "CBI raids premises of STC officials".

The news-item relates to the case of M/s. Andre & Cie, S.A., Laussane against STC claiming damages of US $ 3,92.000 plus interest, cost and expenses before the Refined Sugar Association of London for the reported breach of contract in a sugar deal. STC deputed its Director (Law) and General Manager (Law) to attend the Court proceedings at London in Dec. 1996 and appear before the court as witnesses if so advised by the counsel. One Chief Marketing Manager and One Marketing Manager of STC, the two main witnesses of the corpn. were listed as accused persons in a criminal case registered by CBI on 5th Jan. 1996 and are under suspension w.e.f. 10.1.1996. In view of the criminal case, there were difficulties in obtaining valid travel documents and credibility of such witnesses was highly doubtful. Written witness statements of these two witnesses and others were produced before the Court in addition to documents of the Corpn. The Court, however, ruled against STC. CBI after verification of the deal sought Government's concurrence for registration of a regular criminal case against STC officials. (Necessary approval for registration of a regular case against Director (Finance) STC has been accorded on 11.3.1997 and he is also placed under suspension.

Subsequent to the judgement of the Commercial Court at London, M/s. Andre & Cie raised its claim to US $ 7,04,612.70, which STC is contesting with Refined Sugar Association of London (RSA). STC has also incurred an expenditure amounting to pound sterling 1,08,321.07 towards the costs and expenses of litigation including costs paid by it to the other party after the Court's judgement went against the Corporation. In addition, STC has also paid an amount of Rs. 10,725 (in Indian Rupees) to its counsel.

Setting Up a Committee on Customs and Excise Issues

6653. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had constituted any Committee to examine the customs and excise issues concerning cent per cent export oriented units/export promotion zones;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the details of main recommendations made by the Committee;

(d) whether the Government have implemented any recommendations of the Committee; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and time by which other suggestions made by the Committee are likely to be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) The main recommendations of the Committee which include simplification of wastage norms for jewellery, sale of finished products which are freely importable in the Domestic Tariff Area, domestic sale of gold jewellery against Special Import Licence, facility to re-export/supply of dead-stock or broken stones/rough diamonds, domestic sale facility for software through data communication link, simplification of sub-contracting procedure, enhanced depreciation for computer-hardware and wider delegation of powers to development Commissioners have been

accepted and reflected in the EXIM Policy/Procedures (1997–2002).

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited

6654. SHRI AYYANNA PATRUDU : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited has developed a pollution control technology for steel plants;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether any public or private sector steel plant has shown interest in the technology; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (d) Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) has developed an Electrostatic Precipiator (ESP) for controlling air pollution in Steel Plants. These ESPs can be used in Sinter, Dedusting, Sponge Iron Plants and also in Gas Cleaning Equipments.

BHEL is supplying these ESPs for use in Rourkela Steel Plant and Bhilai Steel Plant in the Public Sector and M/s. Prakash Industries in the Private Sector.

Solar Cookers

6655. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of solar cooker manufacturers in the country, State-wise with installed capacity and actual production and sale of solar cookers during the past three years, year-wise alongwith the estimates of energy saved;

(b) whether the Government have formulated a special scheme for R&D, promotion and marketing of solar cookers, particularly in rural and tribal areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof and results achieved thereunder during the tribal areas;

(d) the fresh initiatives taken for promotion and marketing of solar cookers for energy conservation under the Common Minimum Programme during 1996-97 and achievements reported, State-wise; and

(e) the action plan formulated for the promotion of solar cookers during the current year and target set ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) There are 39 solar cooker manufacturers in the country whose products have been tested by the Solar Energy Centre or the Regional Test Centres of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources. The State-wise list of these manufacturers is given in the attached Statement-I. These manufacturers are estimated to have an aggregate production capacity of around 75,000 solar cookers per year. The Year-wise production and sale during the last 3 years with estimates of energy saved are as follows :

Year	Sale (No.)	Energy saved corresponding to this sale (million kg. of fuel wood equivalent)
1994-95	30221	18.13
1995-96	39174	23.50
1996-97	25697*	21.40*

*Subject to finalisation.

(b), (c) and (d) Government is extending financial assistance to State agencies and manufacturers for promotional activities in the respective States including rural and tribal areas. The activities include demonstrations, publicity, assistance in obtaining BIS certification, opening service centres. etc. Among the new initiatives taken during 1996-97 are interest free loan schemes for users through banks and the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA). In addition, soft loans are also available through IREDA to manufacturers for purchase of machinery. The State-wise achievements made during 1996-97 are given in the attached statement-II

(e) During 1997-98 it is proposed to achieve a sale of 35,000 No. of solar cooker in the country. Financial assistance is also proposed to be continued to States and manufactueres for promotional activities. In addition, soft loan schemes through IREDA and banks will be expanded. New showrooms and service centres will be established.

Statement-I

Statewise number of solar cooker manufacturers whose products have been tested by the Regional Test Centres or the Solar Energy Centre of MNES

State	No.
1	2
1. Andhra Pradesh	2
2. Bihar	1